

I'm Known by How I've Grown, Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 – June 1st, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part one of a new series I've titled, "I'm Known by How I've Grown."
- While I realize the title may sound "catchy" or maybe even "corny" I should probably warn you this series might get a little bit uncomfortable.
- As one so aptly said, "Yes, God will always comfort the afflicted, however, God will often times deem it necessary to afflict the comfortable."

- Such is the case with this portion of God's Word in this series by virtue of a needed rebuke that awaits those comfortable in their carnality.
- Lest you lose heart and be discouraged by this introduction, let me hasten to say truth be made known, we need carnality shaken out of us.
- Here's why I say that this is arguably the most dangerous time in human history to be carnal and worldly as a spiritually immature Christian.

- Let me explain, the world is waxing more evil, and for Christians becoming exceedingly hostile seemingly by the day in this the last of days.
- As such, it would stand to reason absent our spiritual maturity, there remains the propensity to cower and falter in a world not our home.
- Please know that I know God hasn't given us a spirit of fear but that doesn't mean He hasn't given us spiritual discernment and prudence.

- Perhaps better said, we're not prone to be paranoid rather; we're known to be prudent, for what should be understood as obvious reasons.
- However, this spiritual discernment and prudence can only come vis-à-vis spiritual growth and maturity. Enter out text in 1 Corinthians 3.
- More specifically, the paramount importance of identifying that, which stunts and retards my spiritual growth, even though I am born again.

1. I'm unable to eat the meat of solid doctrine (Verses 1-2)

(1) Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. (2) I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

- v1 Paul, who is addressing them as brothers, says to them that he could not do so as spiritual but as worldly, even as mere infants in Christ.
- v2 He then says this was the reason he had to give them milk, not solid food, because they weren't ready for it in the past, nor are they now.
- What Paul is saying here is that as brothers and sisters in Christ, they should in fact be able to digest solid food by now, but they still can't.

Hebrews 5:12-14 NIV In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! (13) Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. (14) But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Charles Spurgeon - "The deeper doctrines cannot be received by the weak, and it is wise to teach such the simpler truths only. ...Too often we learn and unlearn. Our progress is slow, and we remain babes when we ought to be full-grown men in Christ. We draw upon the church's strength when we ought to be contributing to it."

- Be that as it may, it's worth noting that Paul is delineating between three types of people all of which can be found in any church in our day.
- First, there's the natural man, whom we talked about in chapter 2:14, and second, there's the spiritual man, which is in the next verse 2:15.
- Then, thirdly, there's the carnal man, or fleshly and worldly man, if you prefer, which is who Paul is addressing here in the text of chapter 3.

- The reason I point this out is that all three of these types are present in our church today. We're either in the natural, spiritual, or still carnal.
- The natural man is not born again, the spiritual man is born again, and the carnal man is born again but hasn't grown to spiritual maturity.
- It's important to note a struggling Christian isn't the same as a carnal Christian such that struggling is growing and the carnal Christian isn't.

Alan Redpath - "The carnal Christian is a child of God, born again and on his way to heaven, but he is traveling third class."

- Now I am keenly aware that this Redpath quote could be perceived as unduly harsh in labeling carnal Christian's as third class Christians.
- However, that is not what he's saying what he is saying is the spiritual Christian enjoys first class amenities that a carnal Christian does not.
- Sadly, the carnal Christian has no one to blame but themselves for being stuck in the no frills section on the airline of this Christian flight.

- Is it just me, or have you ever boarded a plane only to find no room in the overhead bin or just enough legroom if you're only 4 foot nothing.
- Maybe it's just me, but to add insult to injury, I can't help but notice the first class passengers, who were seated first, watch me walk on by.
- Then, if that weren't bad enough, my seat just so happens to be next to someone who is so tired, they quickly fall asleep and drool on me.

- Here's where I'm going with this illustration, it may be cute when a baby makes sounds and drools, but it's not cute when an adult does it.
- When a baby is learning how to walk physically, it can be adorable, whereas, if an adult has never learned to walk spiritually, it is horrible.
- So much so that they will never experience the joys that those who have a spiritually mature walk enjoy. Simply put, they'll be missing out.

- How horrific would it be if all an adult ate were mashed up baby food, they would miss out on gourmet food, not to mention Spam Musubi?
- Before I make our mouth's water and drool, I'll get to the point. Just because I've been a Christian for many years doesn't mean I'm mature.
- It matters not how long you've been a Christian or the seniority you have as a Christian it's how much you've grown since being a Christian.

- Have you ever had an older Christian say to you something along the lines of, listen, I've been a Christian longer than you've been alive!"
- To this I would humbly ask, if you've been a Christian longer than I've been alive, then why are you still so worldly after all of these years.
- Furthermore, why is it you still need someone to spoon-feed you the elementary truths of God, or worse yet, bottle-feed you baby's milk?

- I'll bring it to a close by asking two questions in which I will include myself and both of which will require the Holy Spirit to access our hearts.
- First, were the Apostle Paul to write me a letter personally, would he be able to address me as a spiritual Christian or as a carnal Christian?
- Secondly, am I solid enough in God's Word, and mature enough for God's Word, or do I still need to be taught the basics of God's Word?